



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

News Release

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**PATRICK HENRY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP
SENIOR CENTER REDUCE ENERGY COSTS**

SAN DIEGO, CA– To help reduce a senior center’s monthly energy costs, staff from the City of San Diego Environmental Services Department led Patrick Henry High School students on an energy conservation audit of the facility on Jan. 8, 2005. The students’ visit resulted from the **San Diego Region Green Action Program**, a partnership of local governments across San Diego County and the San Diego Regional Energy Office. The program trains students to become tomorrow’s leaders in energy management.

Tom Arnold, a sustainable community specialist for the City of San Diego, coordinates the educational program. He led students Maria Melnic, Carissa Lee and Michelle Fries on the energy audit of the senior center, located 928 Broadway in downtown San Diego. The facility is part of the Senior Community Centers, a non-profit service agency that provides programs and services for high-risk seniors living in downtown San Diego.

The Green Action program began late 2004 with five high schools. Organizers expect to educate approximately 1,500 students from 31 high schools throughout San Diego County over the two year span of the program.

The educational program targets the energy-efficient retrofitting of 31 community service projects, with the potential annual savings of \$30,000 and 280,000 kilowatt hours of electricity.

“We are training tomorrow’s leaders to think globally about climate change and to act locally by conserving energy,” said Elmer Heap, director of the City of San Diego Environmental Services Department.

The Environmental Services Department will act as “training leader” for Green Action and give workshops on implementing the program within the various cities. Training for the City of Chula Vista is scheduled for early 2005 and other cities within the partnership are expected to participate as well.

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The students' energy audit of community centers is the final session of the Green Action program that begins with classroom instruction emphasizing the link between local energy use, global trends in energy use, and the resulting impacts on the environment and society. Led by a professional energy engineer, students conducted an audit of their campus using engineering diagnostic tools such as light meters and infrared thermometers to improve energy efficiency.

The Green Action program includes a half-day interactive Youth Forum to be held each spring for students to discuss what they learned and to offer solutions for the future regarding energy use. Prominent environmental experts and elected officials are expected to participate in the forum.

The San Diego Region Green Action Program is a countywide expansion the successful City of San Diego's "Green Schools" program, which has trained more than 1,500 students in energy management and provided energy-efficiency retrofits to 10 community service facilities within the city. The facilities saved approximately \$3,600 and more than 25,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity, and avoided 13 tons of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas associated with global warming. The Green Schools program began with one high school in 2001 and expanded to eight by the time it ended in 2004.

Two previous energy-efficient retrofits of the downtown senior center by the Green Schools program in 2003 and 2004 currently save the facility 3,500 kilowatt-hours of electricity and \$510 annually in energy costs.

The City of San Diego's Environmental Services Department is charged with refuse collection and disposal, recycling and environmentally sound landfill management to meet the City's long-term disposal needs. The Department also oversees the City's management of energy, explores innovative options that create more energy independence, and works to advance more sustainable practices within the City organization and the community. For more information, visit the department's Website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/> or call (858) 694-7000.

The San Diego Regional Energy Office (SDREO) is an independent, public-benefit, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that provides objective information, research, analysis and long-term planning on energy issues for the San Diego region. SDREO serves as a link between consumers and government and is currently managing a variety of publicly-funded rebate, incentive and education programs. SDREO also operates the San Diego Energy Resource Center - a reference, training and demonstration facility for energy education and technologies. For more information, visit <http://www.sdenergy.org> or call toll free at 1-866-SDENERGY.

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